

## Roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-2010)

This roadmap supports the objectives of the gender equality agenda. It builds on the Framework Strategy for equality between women and men 2001-2005 and takes stock of this strategy whilst highlighting the improvements required. It must be followed by an implementation report in 2008 and an evaluation with a follow-up proposal in 2010.

### ACT

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - A Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 [COM(2006) 92 final – Not published in the Official Journal].

### SUMMARY

The current roadmap outlines six priority areas. For each area, it identifies key objectives and actions which should facilitate their implementation. Despite the significant progress made through equal treatment legislation and the social dialogue, the European Union (EU) still faces considerable challenges.

#### Equal economic independence for women and men

- Some of the Lisbon targets relate to the gender dimension, but the efforts made to achieve them must be strengthened, particularly as regards employment and unemployment rates for women.
- Despite existing Community legislation, a 15% pay gap persists between women. This gap arises from structural inequalities in the labour market and direct discriminations.
- Women constitute, on average, 30% of entrepreneurs in the EU. They often face greater difficulties than men in accessing finance and training.
- The risk of poverty is greater for women than for men, as they are more likely to have interrupted careers and, therefore, fewer individual pension rights. Social protection systems should offer them adequate benefits.
- Women and men are confronted with different health risks. Medical research, statistics and safety and health indicators relate in the majority to men and male-dominated work areas.

- The EU is committed to combating the double discrimination immigrant women and those from ethnic minorities are subject to.

#### The reconciliation of private and professional life

- Flexible working arrangements offer advantages both for employees and employers. However, women have recourse to the arrangements of reconciliation policies more often, which could have a negative impact on their professional position and their economic independence.
- The EU faces a demographic decline and an ageing population, which has effects on the labour market. It is essential that access to childcare facilities and a work-life balance are made easier, and that the provision of services to the elderly is improved.
- Measures which encourage men to take parental leave or to work part-time should be encouraged.

#### Equal representation in decision-making

- Women's persistent under-representation in civil society, politics and senior management in public administration is a democratic deficit.
- The representation of women in economic decision-making can contribute to innovative and productive work, in particular in relation to flexible working and transparency in promotion processes.
- Member States have set a target of 25% women in leading positions in the field of public sector research.

#### The eradication of all forms of gender-based violence

- The EU combats violations of fundamental rights to life, safety, freedom, dignity and physical and emotional integrity. The EU leads actions against customary practices which violate these rights.
- The Commission suggests criminalising the trafficking of women and at the same time discouraging the demand for human beings for sexual exploitation. The new Directive on residence permits for victims of trafficking should, in particular, enable their reintegration into the labour market.

#### The elimination of gender stereotypes

- Education, training and culture should enable women to explore non-traditional educational paths and valued professional fields.
- Women are generally employed in sectors that are less valued, and they generally occupy the lower echelons of the organisational hierarchy.

- The media continue to convey gender stereotypes. It is essential that a regular dialogue takes place between the authorities and the stakeholders involved.

The promotion of gender equality in third countries

- Under the framework of the enlargement process, accession, candidate or potential candidate countries are committed to transposing the Community acquis in terms of gender equality.

- Equality between men and women has its own separate objective in the European Neighbourhood Policy, as well as in external and development policies.

- The EU promotes internationally recognised principles such as the Millennium Development Declaration and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA).

Key actions

The Commission will modernise the existing EU gender equality legislation. A 2006 recast of the legislation was carried out regarding opportunities and treatment. The Commission will ensure that the aspect of gender equality is incorporated as far as possible into all policies, such as the integrated guidelines for growth and jobs and in the new streamlined open method of coordination that covers pensions, social inclusion, health and long-term care.

Raising awareness is the main way of eliminating gender stereotypes. One action the Commission hopes to take is to develop dialogue with EU citizens through the plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate and the “Your Europe” portal.

The need for better statistics has arisen in most fields. New indicators and a new composite Gender Equality Index should make it easier to compare data at EU level. Statistics broken down by sex are also important.

More research is required on the gender dimension in health and on health and social sectors professions. Work will continue on the European database on women and men in decision-making. The 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development may be used as an instrument to finance specific research.

At international level, the Beijing Platform, which is backed by the Commission, makes provision for better data collection capacity on gender mainstreaming in developing countries.

## Financing

A new European Institute for Gender Equality, with EUR 50 million of funding, should play a key role in monitoring most of the above actions.

The PROGRESS programme finances action with a transversal dimension, given that gender equality is an aspect that is common to a number of policies. For this reason, the Commission should explore the possibilities of integrating and assessing the impact of the gender perspective in budgeting at EU level.

The Structural Funds are a major source of funding. The Structural Funds will also help achieve the Barcelona targets on childcare and the development of health care facilities.

The European Social Fund (ESF) plays a role in integrating women into the labour market, as well as in the integration of women from third countries into the EU, and in the elimination of stereotypes.

## Context

A number of events should offer the opportunity to drive the gender equality agenda forward, in particular the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All in 2007 and the European Year of Combating Exclusion and Poverty in 2010, as well as the 2006 Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on gender equality.

The Commission must establish an EU network of women in economic and political decision-making positions, and a network of gender equality bodies. It works closely with NGOs and the social partners.

## RELATED ACTS

Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - Mid-term progress report on the roadmap for equality between women and men (2006-2010) [COM(2008) 760 – Not published in the Official

Journal]. This is a mid-term progress report on the results achieved since the adoption of the roadmap for 2006-2010. It was implemented through two annual work programmes and its objectives were strengthened in 2007 with the adoption of the European Pact for Gender Equality. The PROGRESS Programme has financed the transversal implementation of the roadmap in other policies, as well as communication actions.

The principal advances in terms of equality have been made in those domains which have been the focus of quantified objectives, common to Member States. Thus nearly all the domains affected by the roadmap have made progress. However, progress in the Member States is uneven and efforts are required to meet the objectives fixed for 2010. The Report makes a number of proposals in this respect:

- improve governance, the Commission considers it necessary to bring together the commitment of all the stakeholders involved and to lead an evaluation of national and Community legislation, EU programmes and its budgetary procedures in order to better incorporate the principle of equality. International and European indicators should be improved, as well as the comparability of harmonised statistical data. It is essential that the European Institute for Gender Equality becomes operational in order to achieve the objectives of the roadmap;
- increase awareness of social and economic challenges, in particular through the Lisbon Strategy, the renewed Social Agenda and the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in the field of social protection and social inclusion. Cohesion policies, education and research should be evaluated. Gender equality should be improved in decision-making, political and economic bodies, as well as in the media.

The final evaluation of the impact of these actions will be presented in 2010.

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